

REMARKS

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 6-14, 16-21, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. US2002/0034977A1 (Burns et al.).

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over Burns et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5, 505,461 (Bell et al.).

Claims 5 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Burns et al.

Claims 15 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Burns et al. and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2003/0078094A1 (Gatto et al.).

Specification Amendment

The specification has been amended to include a Summary. No new matter has been added.

Claim Amendments

Claims 6-9 have been canceled. The remaining claims, claims 1-5 and 10-24, have been amended to distinguish over the cited references.

Applicants' Invention

Applicants' invention, in one configuration, is directed to a service center coupled to a gaming network and to an automatic teller network. The service center includes a player identifier structured to validate a user as an authorized holder of a player account on the gaming network. The service center further includes a ticket reader and a verifier coupled to the player identifier and the ticket reader. The verifier is structured to validate a ticket of an authorized holder that is inserted into the ticket reader. The service center also includes a payment

dispenser structured to eject from the service center an amount of value after the ticket is validated.

Applicants' invention, in another configuration, is directed to a stand-alone service center that is coupled to a gaming network. The stand-alone service center is structured to present transaction choices to a user, accept a selected choice, verify an identity of a user having a player account, and accept a ticket at a ticket reader. The stand-alone service center is also structured to validate the accepted ticket by comparing it to data stored on the gaming network. The stand-alone service center does not include a gaming machine.

The Cited Art

Burns et al.

Burns et al. is directed to a coinless gaming system 10. The system includes a host central processing unit (CPU) 100 and a series of gaming machines 200. The play of a gaming machine is controlled by internal software 202 in the gaming machine. (¶ 38). A gaming machine may generate cash-out slips. (¶ 44). A gaming machine may accept paper currency, free play coupons, and cash-out slips. (¶43). A cash-out slip from one machine may be accepted by another machine. (¶45).

The gaming machines include a paper currency reader 204 for detecting the validity and value of currency. (¶ 39). The gaming machines also include a bar code reader 206 for reading a bar code on a ticket. (¶41). In one embodiment, a bar code printer 208 is used to print bar codes on cash-out slips. The CPU 100 generates the bar code which represents the monetary value of the credit stored in a particular gaming machine along with a randomly generated number to permit the CPU 100 to verify the validity and unique identification of the cash-out slip. This is necessary since the cash-out slip generated by a bar code printer of one machine is capable of

being inserted into a bar code reader of another machine. (¶45). Thus, the machines do not need to use coins. (¶11).

The gaming machines may also include a player identification reader 210. A reader 210 is capable of reading a room key or a specially encoded identification card for identifying a player using a gaming machine. The identification card permits the CPU 100 to keep track of a player and the amount of time played by the identified player. The identification card is not intended to provide the player with credit so the concern over the security of the card is not significant. (¶47) The reader 210 input may also be a keypad which a player would use to enter a number or some other means of identification. (¶48).

The gaming system 10 also includes one or more change stations 300 or ATMs 500. (¶49). The change stations include a second paper currency reader 302, a second bar code reader 304, and a second bar code printer 306. The second currency reader, the second bar code reader, and the second bar code printer are the same as used in the gaming machines. The change stations also include a currency dispenser 308 so that when a cash-out slip is inserted into the bar code reader 306, paper currency and coins can be dispensed directly to the user. (¶50).

Gatto et al.

Gatto et al. is directed to a cashless gaming system 700 in a local area network 704. The network includes gaming machines 600 and ATMs 500. The network is controlled by a server 702. (¶39).

In operation, an ATM 500 prints a coded ticket 100 that bears at least both a human readable verification code 106 and a machine-readable code 108. The coded ticket is dispensed to a player. The player then can take the coded ticket to a gaming machine and use it to initiate game play. If the player decides not to play the gaming machine, he may present the printed coded ticket back to the ATM and obtain his money back. (¶41).

Further, the subject matter of claims 15 and 22 would not have been obvious in view of the combination of Burns et al. and Gatto et al.

Three criteria must be met to establish obviousness. First, the prior art must provide one of ordinary skill in the art with a suggestion or motivation to modify or combine the teachings of the references relied upon in rejecting the claims. Second, the prior art must provide one of ordinary skill in the art with a reasonable expectation of success. Third, the prior art, either alone or in combination, must teach or suggest each and every limitation of the rejected claims. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed invention, as well as the reasonable expectation of success, must come from the prior art and not from Applicant's disclosure. If any one of these criteria is not met, a case of obviousness is not established.

Amended claim 15, for instance, specifies that the service center is structured to directly transfer an account value from an account on the ATM network to a player account. Gatto et al. does not disclose such a system.

Instead, in Gatto et al., the ATM 500 dispenses a coded ticket to a player. The player must then take the coded ticket to a gaming machine and insert it in the gaming machine in order to play the gaming machine. An account value is not directly transferred from an account on the ATM network to a player account.

Therefore, it is submitted that Applicants' claimed invention is not anticipated by Burns et al., nor would it have been obvious in view of Burns et al., either alone or in combination with other references.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance of the claims at the earliest possible date is requested.

Applicants' Invention is neither Anticipated nor would it Have Been Obvious

Burns et al. does not disclose each and every feature of Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in the amended claims. Thus, Applicants' invention is not anticipated by Burns et al.

Burns et al., for instance, as called for by amended claim 1, does not disclose a service center having a player identifier structured to validate a user as an authorized holder of a player account on a gaming network and a verifier coupled to the player identifier and the ticket reader, and structured to validate a ticket of an authorized holder that is inserted into the ticket reader.

In Burns, the reader 210 is used as part of a player tracking system to keep track of the player and the amount of time or money played by the player. The player tracking system is separate from the cashless system. The cash-out slips of Burns et al. used in the cashless system include a bar code used to determine a value of the credit associated with the cash-out slip. The bar code along with a randomly generated number allow the validity and the identity of the cash-out slip to be determined. The Burns et al. system, however, does not require the bearer of the cash-out slip to be an authorized holder of a player account prior to paying a user the value represented by a cash-out slip. Any user may receive value for a cash-out slip if it has not previously been paid. (¶45).

Additionally, amended claim 10 and claim 20 specify that the service center does not include a gaming machine. In the Office Action, with respect to claim 20, it was said the "station of '977 is not a gaming device (300, FIG 1)." The change stations 300, however, only include a paper currency reader, a bar coded reader, and a bar code printer. They do not include any sort of reader for verifying an identity of a user having a player account. Only the gaming machines 200 include an identification reader.

If prosecution of this application can be assisted by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' undersigned attorney at (510) 663-1100.

If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this amendment (including any fees due for an extension of time), such fees may be charged to Deposit Account No. 500388 (Order No. IGT1P327).

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Respectfully submitted,
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